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TENNESSEE FORESTRY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

6/23/2023

Tennessee Forestry Commission meeting was held in the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry, Bruer Building Oak Training Room in Nashville, TN, June 23, 2023

Participants:

Forestry Commission Members: Tom Midyett, Chairman; John Charles Wilson, Vice Chairman; Dr. Sharon Jean-Philippe, Secretary; Mike Witt, Bill Legg, Drew Getty.

*Absent - Alex Richman (excused absence). Commission had a quorum.

Forestry Commission Ex-Officio Members:

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA): Brian Chandler, Forest Management Program Leader

Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA): Chris C. Eaton, Chief Financial Officer; Samantha Wilson, Budget Coordinator

Tennessee Department of Agriculture – Division of Business Development: David Neumann, Forest Business Consultant

Tennessee Department of Agriculture - Division of Forestry (TDF): David Arnold, State Forester; Heather Slayton, Assistant State Forester; Rachel Greene, Forest Data & Analysis Unit Leader; Tim Phelps, Communications and Outreach Unit Leader; Robert Elliott, Forest Health & Sustainability Unit Leader; Philip Morrissey, Forest Stewardship Forester; Dyshea Brown, Executive Administrative Assistant.

Tennessee Forestry Association: Candace Dinwiddie, Executive Director

Tennessee State Government/Customer Focused Government: Lauren May, Senior Management Consultant; Whitney N. Flatt, Senior Management Consultant; Dr. Alexander L. Stephens, Management Consultant.

Dovetail Partners: Kathryn Fernholz, President, CEO



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Public: Mr. Max Farrell, Mrs. Claire Getty, Jaq Payne, Kayla Stuart, Connon Bosch, James Miller

Chairman Tom Midyett welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting began at 10:10 a.m. CDT

Approval of the Minutes of the April 4, 2023 meeting

John Charles motioned to approve minutes as presented. Mike Witt seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve. The motion passed.

Election of Commission Officers for 2023 – 2024

Bill Legg stated the same slate of officers from 2022 – 2023 should be reaffirmed as the 2023 – 2024 Commission officers.

Motion to approve Commission Secretary, Dr. Sharon Jean Philippe: Bill Legg made a motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve.

Motion to approve Commission Vice Chairman, John Charles Wilson: Bill Legg made a motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve.

Motion to approve Commission Chairman, Tom Midyett: Bill Legg made a motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve.

Carbon Storage, Carbon Markets and Wood Products

Kathryn Fernholz

- Kathryn Fernholz is president and CEO of Dovetail Partners, a non-profit that seek to engage in thoughtful, collaborative processes that bring about solutions to sustain forest resources.
- Discussed connection between carbon markets, forests and forest products.
- A detailed report is available on Dovetail's website <https://dovetailinc.org/portfolio>

Landowner Assistance Strategic Plan

Lauren May, Whitney Flatt, Dr. Alex Stephens

- Staff from the Governor's office of Customer Focused Government helped facilitate development of a strategic plan for the Division's landowner assistance programs. The final version was presented to the Commission. The plan was well received. Next steps include plan internalization to the Division and implementation.

Public Comment

- Mr. Max Farrell, a Chattanooga resident, voiced support of the current off highway vehicle use restrictions on Franklin State Forest. He provided testimony as to the conditions before the use restrictions and conditions after the use restrictions. He voiced concern of continued resource damage and public nuisance if off highway vehicle use is allowed once the current restrictions expire on July 8th. He voiced support in continuance of the ban. Max wants to stay engaged with the discussions concerning off highway vehicle use on Franklin State



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Forest Health & Sustainability Unit update

Robert Elliott

Elliott

- Mr. Elliott provided updates on current and new projects slated for the unit.

Budget discussion

David Arnold, Heather Slayton, Samantha Wilson, Tom Midyett

Wilson, Tom Midyett

- A plan has been developed for utilizing \$3 million in new funding for Division employees. The plan will be submitted to downtown DoHR upon approval by the Commissioner's office. The Commission, Department, and Division acknowledged and thanked Tom Midyett for his leadership role in securing these needed funds.
- The Commission's next meeting was moved up to August 4th to align with the State's budget development timeline. Department budgets are anticipated due the first week of September.

Vacancy report

Heather Slayton

- Full time employee percentage vacancy has increased from 9% to 11%.
- West Tennessee District is down four area foresters.
- West TN State Forests have vacancies for one assistant district forester, one Forester 3, and one Forester 2.

Tennessee Champion Tree program

Jaq Payne, Kayla Stuart, Connon Bosch, James Miller

- Students from the U.T. School of Natural Resources presented information on the Tennessee Champion Tree program.
- Included in the update was the exciting news that UT will now host and manage the American Forests National Champion Tree Registry.

Future Meeting Dates

- August 4, 2023 - Approve Division budget. (first Friday in August).
- January 9, 2024 – Discuss budget, timber sales (second Tuesday in January)
- April 9, 2024 – Approve Nursery seedling pricing/production and appoint sub-committee to nominate Commission officers (second Tuesday in April).
- June 12, 2024 – Election of Commission officers (second Wednesday in June).

John Charles Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill Legg seconded the motion. The Meeting was adjourned at 2:30PM CDT.